

so tonight  
in retrospect  
when I listen to the barking of this  
good wooly dog  
I am almost sorry that I intrude upon its  
life  
but good literature is usually  
disturbing, they  
say, so  
bark away  
as I pour this wine and torture this  
IBM  
# 6126-II-0026005.

#### THE UNINITIATED (1984)

I was drinking with this fellow the other  
night, not a bad sort, young but not a bad  
sort, compared to the others, you know.  
I live an isolated life. don't mind that, prefer  
that,  
but now and then  
(mostly then)  
I won't drink alone.

it went all right.  
we exchanged a few sad tales of bad luck  
with women.  
we had some good laughs.

then he got a bit  
drunk.  
be bent forward, grinning  
slyly, said,  
"come on now, you got to admit you probaby  
miss the times you had on  
skid row, on the bum, all  
that...."

it's when a fellow talks that  
way, even if he's not a bad  
sort, you know he's never been  
there.

not that you have to have been there  
but once you get out  
almost everything that happens after that  
seems blessedly  
marvelous.

"no," I told him, "I don't miss the  
row...."

"ah, come on," he said, "cut the  
shit!"



"you better ease off on the drinking,"  
I told him, "you've got a long way  
to go."

#### THE SKATERS (1984)

I am sitting at a table in the mall drinking coffee while  
Linda shops.

I sit above the ice rink where the children skate  
in the afternoon,  
mostly young girls dressed in blues, reds, whites, greens,  
purples, yellows, orange.  
they are all very good, swift, they spin and glide,  
there are no collisions, even the tiniest of children are  
very good, all —  
tiny, larger and largest —  
whirl through open spaces as if they were one  
connecting body where each of the parts is aware of  
where the other parts are.

I like it, very much, but then I think  
as they get older they will stop skating, they will  
stop singing, painting, dancing,  
their interests will be diluted into acts of  
survival,  
the grace and the gamble will be substituted for a  
heavy  
surety.  
but let's not feel too bad:  
this happens to animals too:  
they play just so long  
then  
stop...

then I see Linda, it appears that she has  
found something shopping that  
pleases her, she rushes toward my table, she  
waves,  
laughing.  
I stand up, wave, smile,  
things seem very humorous  
as down below us they whirl and  
glide.  
some moments are nice, some are  
nicer, some are even worth  
writing  
about.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA